



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

# LARRY CRAIG

[HTTP://CRAIG.SENATE.GOV/PRESS/](http://craig.senate.gov/press/)

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
January 4, 2008

Dan Whiting (202) 224-8078  
Sid Smith (208) 342-7985

**Why Bother About Bhutto?**  
**by Senator Larry Craig**

To many in Idaho, the nation of Pakistan is just a place we hear about in the news every now and then. Its impact on our daily lives is negligible for most. So, when news arrived that a Pakistani leader was assassinated on December 27, I'm sure some just shrugged their shoulders and continued on with the day. That's understandable, but the implications of Benazir Bhutto's death sent shock waves around the world that should not be ignored by anyone.

Why did her death matter to Idaho and the United States? Let me lay out a few reasons. Bhutto had long been known, and had been campaigning for prime minister of her country, as a pro-Western leader who would try to build ties to the United States. She sought to help mend the rift between the Muslim world and the West. She had talked about cooperating with the United States in the Global War on Terrorism, and how she and her government would be a force against extremism. She promised to leverage this relationship with us to help Pakistan grow prosperous and become a modern democracy.

Bhutto's election would have dealt a severe blow to terrorist elements hiding and operating in Pakistan, and the terrorists knew it.

For us here at home, Bhutto's assassination should serve as a strong reminder that we cannot grow complacent in our fight against violent Islamic fundamentalism. This fight, like World War II, will define a generation. Just as the outcome of WWII shaped the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so this fight will shape the world for decades – or more – to come. Will we stand up against violent radicals who threaten anyone who dares to disagree with them? Or will we cave, and decide the fight is too costly and not worth the sacrifice?

So far, we have made the right choice. But, as many have pointed out, this is not a war fought on traditional battlefields between armies in uniforms. We have achieved many victories, but we should not expect a quick and formal surrender by our enemies. The enemy isn't interested in accommodation or mutual understanding. Their only interest is our destruction.

Just about a year ago, President Bush announced a new strategy to fight the terrorists in Iraq. By now, we are all familiar with "the surge," and the positive results it has produced. Although many were skeptical, the surge seems to be working, but that doesn't mean our job in Iraq is done. I applaud the President for adapting to circumstances on the battlefield, allowing our troops and the Iraqi people the best opportunity for victory against our common enemy.

**[MORE]**

We must continue our work there until Iraq is stable and capable of self-governance. Security is improving, but Iraq's government has failed to meet many goals the United States has laid out for it. I would remind readers, however, that Iraqi politicians operate in a vastly different environment. Daily, they and their families face the threat of kidnapping, torture, and murder, simply for being involved in the government. Obviously, that's true of Pakistan as well. Political progress in Iraq will take time under such similar circumstances.

Bhutto's death is a strong reminder that terrorism is still very real. There is still work to do in the war on terror, including Iraq and Afghanistan, and it will not be easy. I am truly grateful for those who have served in harm's way, because their courage and service provides hundreds of millions of Americans the freedom and security not afforded to most around the world. They demonstrate that the actions of leaders and soldiers half a world away provide us safety here at home.